

Columbia Gas Transmission
27-28 November 2001 Meeting with Eastern Trail Supporters
Observations by John Andrews

Executive Summary

Eastern Trail Supporters were encouraged when five managers from Columbia Gas Transmission (TCO) visited Maine to meet and talk about a trail easement along TCO's portion of the Eastern Rail corridor.

During the summer of 2001, Columbia Gas Transmission Company (TCO), Charleston, WV accepted responsibility for managing the Granite State Gas pipeline. TCO manages 19,000 miles of gas transmission lines from Texas to Maine. Columbia has trails along some of its other corridors. Because corridor management has changed, this meeting was, in many ways, a new beginning. It could not have gone better. I thank the many, many people who helped make this a success.

Columbia Gas Transmission Attendees

Cheryl Davis, Manager, Land Services, Columbia Transmission, Granite State (office in Charleston WV)

Joanne Eells, Team Leader, Land Services, Columbia Transmission, Granite State (office in Strasburg VA)

Gwen Border-Walker, Manager, Field Services, Columbia Transmission, and Operations Manager for Granite State (office in Strasburg VA)

Martin Burkey, Team Leader, Field Services, Columbia Transmission and Granite State (office in Ellwood City, PA, temporarily living in Maine.)

Karl Brack, Director, Communications, Columbia Transmission and Granite State (office in Charleston, WV).

Maine ET supporters who met the TCO Team are listed at the end of this report. (I accept responsibility and regret not recognizing anyone who attended to help support the ET.)

High Lights

We toured the ET corridor traveling on-road with stops at many road crossings. We made long stops to visit the S. Berwick Great Works River crossing, the Saco River crossing and the Scarborough Marsh Dunstan River crossing. We held luncheon-receptions in Eliot Town Hall and in Scarborough Town Hall. We had a dinner-reception at DiMillo's. TCO, MDOT, and ETA met for an introductory two-hour easement discussion in Scarborough Town Hall. Topics included:

1. Federal funding requirements for long-term access.
2. Federal gas transmission public safety regulations and pipeline safety classes.

3. Impact on federal safety requirements of adding trails users. (Needs study.)
4. Trail construction cost impact on TCO and how it's funded.
5. Pipeline maintenance and the pre-defined detours provided by the on-road ET.
6. Replacing the Dunstan River suspended gas pipeline with one well under the Dunstan River by controlled boring. Replacing the Saco River bridge crossing with a similar directionally bored pipeline below that riverbed.

There must have been hundreds of one-on-one conversations during the lunch and dinner receptions. It was wonderful to participate in and observe the informal, cordial conversations as ET supporters and Columbia's team got to know each other and to understand each other's perspectives. Some short-term outcomes:

1. Bruce Gullifer, Scarborough Community Affairs Director, may be able to apply for many of the permits needed by TCO to support its desire to move its gas pipe well below the proposed Dunstan River. This would overcome one of the obstacles to installing a 12-foot wide Eastern Trail bridge over the Dunstan River.
2. Larry Nadeau, Saco Director DPW, offered to organize a pipeline safety forum with Marty Burkey to help town officials better understand pipeline safety issues.
3. ATV trespass and its reduction was recognized as a town, Columbia, ETA, ETMD and neighborhood challenge benefiting from cooperation by all parties.
4. Every ET supporter welcomed Columbia to Maine and offered their support.
5. During this first meeting, we identified easement, management and construction issues needing more work to gain better understanding.

We are deeply appreciative that five busy TCO managers took two days to visit Maine and its ET supporters. (We noted that November is not the most popular time to visit Maine.) We look forward to a successful long-term mutually beneficial relationship.

As the Columbia Team was leaving, Maggie Warren awarded ETA baseball caps and we designated each Columbia guest an Honorary ETA Member. (Look for photos in the spring ETA newsletter.)

Listed below are the Eastern Trail supporters who attended at least one meeting with our guests from Columbia Gas Transmission. We appreciate the time each one took to support this visit.

Federal ET Supporters

Peter Morin representing U.S. Senator Snowe

Ken Nelson representing U. S. Senator Collins

Kate Dempsey representing Congressman Allan

Nathan Smith, Portland City Council & pro bono ETA attorney, also representing Congressman Allan

Burnham Martin, National Park Service, Rivers Trails Program, ETA Advisory Trustee

State ET Supporters

Ron Roy, MDOT Director of Passenger Transportation representing Gov. King
Representative Marie Laverriere-Boucher, Maine Legislature, Biddeford
John Balicki, MDOT Bicycle Pedestrian Coordinator
Toni Kemmerle, MDOT Staff Attorney

Town Officials (including ETMD Trustees)

Ann Whitten, N. Berwick Selectman & ETMD Trustee
Barry Tibbetts, Kennebunk Town Manager, & ETMD Trustee
Bob Hamblen, Saco City Planner, & ETMD Trustee
Bruce Gullifer, Director Scarborough Community Affairs, & ETMD Trustee
Dan Blanchette, Eliot Town Manager & ETA Treasurer
Dick Brown, S. Berwick Town Manager
Joe Kline, Old Orchard Beach Town Council
Jonathan Carter, Wells Town Manager
Larry Nadeau, Saco Public Works Director
Phil McCarthy, Kittery Town Manager
Rick Oliver, Biddeford Public Works Department, ETMD Trustee
Ron Owens, Scarborough Town Manager
Sharon Brossard, N Berwick Recreation Director
Tony Cilluffo, Wells Selectman & ETMD Trustee
Zip Zamarchi, Eliot ETMD Trustee

ETA Trustees

Bill Heath, ETA Vice President
Dan Blanchette, ETA Treasurer
Horace Wood, ETA Trustee & former Saco City Council
John Andrews, ETA President & ETMD Trustee
Larry Glantz, ETA VP & Web page
Mac Sexton, ETA Trustee, pro bono attorney & ETMD Trustee
Maggie Warren, ETA Trustee, baseball caps and newsletters
Pam Partow ETA Trustee, Trail Development & ETMD Trustee
Steve Workman, ETA Trustee & Consultant to ETMD
Tom Daley, ETA Secretary

Other Key ET Supporters who met our Columbia guests during their visit

John Gold, President, Saco Bay Trails & Custom Communication
Kate Albert, Southern Maine Regional Planning Commission & ETMD Staff
Sharon McHold, NPS Rivers and Trails consulting attorney & pro bono ETA attorney
Sue Ellen Bordwell, Trustee East Coast Greenway Alliance